

## Roe's School Construction Amendment to H.R. 2187 Passes the U.S. House of Representatives

WASHINGTON, DC — Congressman Phil Roe (TN-1) introduced and passed an amendment to H.R. 2187, the 21st Century Green High-Performing Public School Facilities Act. Roe's school construction amendment adds accountability to this legislation by requiring the Institute of Educational Sciences within the Department of Education to study the impact that federal school construction dollars have on the institutions that receive the funding.

Today, Roe's school construction amendment overwhelmingly passed the U.S. House of Representatives by a vote of 432-2.

Roe noted his concerns with the H.R. 2187: It costs too much. It borrows too much. And it controls too much. Based on Congressional Budget Office estimates, it is predicted that this bill will cost taxpayers nearly \$40 billion.

"Nearly all education programs today are required to be scientifically evaluated so that Congress and the taxpayers understand the academic benefits of what they are funding, and this program should be no different," said Roe. "That is why I have offered an amendment to require the Department of Education to evaluate the impact of projects funded under this bill on student achievement. Through this evaluation we should be able to clearly identify the positive effects of school renovation, modernization, or construction on increasing academic achievement.

"In its current form, H.R. 2187 borrows too much and costs too much. With a national debt around \$11 trillion, and an expected \$1.8 trillion deficit for Fiscal Year 2009 alone, we need to get our country's financial house in order and balance the budget. Now is the wrong time to authorize new spending for a program with unproven results. If we don't start setting priorities, the children we're trying to help with this bill will have to sacrifice their dreams to pay off our debts and deficits."

Roe made the following statement on the House floor regarding his school construction amendment:

Thank you, Mister Chairman. This amendment is simple, straightforward, and hopefully noncontroversial. It adds a bit of accountability to this legislation by requiring the Institute of Educational Sciences within the Department of Education to study the impact that federal school construction dollars have on the institutions that receive the funding.

I know proponents of this legislation will say that school construction does impact performance, and they may be correct. I am skeptical of the claim, so I'm asking for the opportunity to study the effects of school construction on student performance. This amendment would require the Institute to issue a report a year after schools receive school construction funding and report on the impact the funding has. I am hopeful such a report could provide valuable insights into the best use of taxpayer dollars.

I know Congressman Cuellar had planned to come down to speak in support of this amendment. It's nice to have bipartisan support for accountability.

I urge adoption of the amendment and reserve the balance of my time.

\* To view Roe's statement, please [click here](#) .

In remarks about the overall legislation earlier Wednesday, Congressman Roe stated:

I rise in opposition to the legislation.

School construction is being billed as something that can dramatically improve student performance, and while it may have some effect, I would guess that it impacts performance less than parental involvement, less than having a quality teacher, and less than having good textbooks and curricula. Since arriving in Washington, all I've heard is that these programs are all dramatically underfunded, so I question why we would add a new program to fund that could divert more resources from these other programs.

I was educated in a two-room country schoolhouse with no running water and no indoor plumbing. I think my parents placing a high value on education had far more to do with my success than the condition of my school did.

In our debate before the Rules Committee yesterday, we were discussing the merits of federal involvement in school construction. The point was made that state and local officials are being forced to cut back on school construction because they're required to balance their budgets, so we at the federal level should start funding this construction to make up for their shortfalls.

At home, we had a simple philosophy: spend less than you take in. Here in Washington, we have a different philosophy: borrow more than we take in and then spend that. At a time of record deficits, I believe the federal government should act more like our state and local officials, many of whom are setting priorities and trying to fund the programs that get the most bang for their buck.

Some communities, like Johnson City, Tennessee, where I was Mayor before coming to Washington, are investing their own resources in school construction. We were just able to fund 50 million dollars worth of improvements because we acted in a fiscally responsible manner in previous budgets and now have a surplus. Other communities have chosen to put off these needs while they weather this economic crisis.

I think it speaks volumes when communities collectively decide that other programs are more of a priority to student achievement than school construction, yet we at the federal level are making the opposite determination. It seems to me that if we wanted to do something that would really help students, we would be better off with funding IDEA and No Child Left Behind programs, which are proven to boost student achievement.

I urge a no vote on the legislation and yield back.